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SUBJECT: RISING CRIME IN LAGOS: AMBASSADOR MEETINGS
WITH THE ACTING NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR AND THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE

1. Summary: On Friday, June 8, Ambassador Jeter, RSO Gibson and RSO Bishop met with the Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Force (IGP) and the Acting National Security Advisor who is also the Director General of the Nigeria State Security Service to discuss the increase in violent crime in Lagos. The meetings were a frank exchange of views on the current crime situation and resulted in promises from the Police IG for increased Mobile Police Officers to be directly assigned to the Consulate and for a more proactive approach to command and control problems of security forces by the A/NSA. The MOA establishing a formal relationship between the U.S. Mission and the NPF was also discussed. End summary.

2. On Friday, June 8, Ambassador Jeter, RSO Gibson, Lagos and RSO Bishop, Abuja met with Musiliu Smith, Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Force (IGP) at the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) Headquarters in Abuja. In addition to the IGP, eight Deputy Inspectors General were present at this meeting. The Ambassador expressed his gratitude for the NPF continuous support of the U.S. Diplomatic Missions in Nigeria. He then expressed his concern to the IGP regarding the recent increase in criminal violence in Lagos. Ambassador Jeter advised the IGP that most of the diplomatic, expatriate and business community in the affluent Victoria and Ikoyi Island neighborhoods of Lagos share our concerns regarding the dramatic increase in criminal activity. The Ambassador added that such events are extremely costly to the GON in terms of potential loss of foreign investment and steady erosion of a solid economic base. Ambassador Jeter also informed the IGP that he had previously met with the Lagos State Governor regarding this issue and expressed the same concerns for the overall cost to the economy of Lagos if this wave of crime were not stopped.

3. RSO Gibson briefed the Inspectors regarding specifics of the increase in criminal activity in Lagos. RSO advised IGP Smith that he has noted a significant increase in crime during the past eight months in Lagos. While there has always been a criminal threat, recent events indicate that this threat had escalated beyond control. RSO described how gangs of violent criminals have begun to concentrate their efforts in the previously considered safe areas of Victoria Island (VI) and Ikoyi. He also noted that these criminals appear to be well organized, well trained and increasingly brazen in the commission of criminal offenses. These gangs work in groups numbering up to eight persons, armed with military-style automatic rifles.

4. RSO Gibson further described how the criminals had apparently crossed several previously sacrosanct lines by increasingly targeting diplomatic vehicles (to include U.S.) in armed car-jacking attempts. Previously, members of the diplomatic community residing in VI and Ikoyi had been relatively immune to being targeted by criminals. The IGP was informed that most diplomatic, expatriate and business community residents in Lagos are, for the first time, expressing a real fear of travel during the peak periods of criminal activity from 2000 to 2300 hours. The IGP was also told that this increase in criminal activity is already having a negative impact on local businesses, as most people are too afraid to venture out of their homes during the evening hours.

5. To further illustrate the severity of the situation, RSO Gibson described two recent incidents affecting U.S. Consulate Lagos. First, the RSO said that the Consulate Local Guard Force mobile patrol vehicle was the victim of an armed carjacking in which a NPF officer assigned to the Consulate was shot and killed by the criminals

(Lagos 01432). RSO also described another incident in which the Assistant Regional Security Officer was the victim of an attempted car-jacking incident (Lagos 01475). RSO continued that late-model European and Japanese sport utility vehicles have always been at increased risk of being targeted by carjackers. Now, however, criminals have begun targeting all makes and models of vehicles and using stolen vehicles to commit other crimes before fleeing the area.

16. RSO advised that, in his opinion, one of the main obstacles to successfully countering this criminal threat was a decided lack of command and control of all available security forces deployed. RSO added that he has personally seen how representatives of the Mobile Police Force directly responsible for protecting diplomatic properties and personnel are incapable of receiving or transmitting pertinent security information to other offices of the NPF to include the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the Joint Military/Police patrols, and the regular NNP. RSO offered that a central point of command and control, if established, would coordinate all forces to counteract any threat. IGP Smith countered that all of these forces were under his control and that he was looking at ways of better coordinating their efforts.

17. Ambassador Jeter queried IGP Smith on the status of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) submitted to the NPF by both AmEmbassy Abuja and CONGEN Lagos. The MOA was requested in response to a Department (DS) directive to formalize the existing relationship between the Mission in Nigeria and the NPF officers assigned to protect U.S. Diplomatic interests. The IGP responded that he was aware of the MOA and that his office was required to consult with other agencies and gain their approval. The IGP was also queried regarding the status of information requested by RSO Abuja to initiate Anti-Terrorism-Assistance (ATA) training offered to the NPF by the Department. The IGP responded by directing the appropriate Assistant Inspector General of Police for training (also present at this meeting) to take the necessary action to promptly provide this information.

18. (U) The IGP responded that the NPF was well aware of the recent increase in crime in Lagos, and attributed it to mass unemployment. He gave assurances that he would deploy more police officer to the area in an effort to stem the rising criminal tide. The IGP also attributed the increase in crime to the presence of the numerous small vendors and kiosks that are located on almost every street in Victoria and Ikoyi Island. The IGP said that the presence of these vendors and kiosks afford criminals a means to easily conceal their criminal intent in residential areas where they operate and also serves as a platform for surveillance before conducting criminal acts. IGP Smith further noted that the Lagos State Government and not the NPF had the responsibility to eliminate these unauthorized vendors and kiosks. In terms of the diplomatic community in Lagos, The IGP promised to send a representative to the next meeting tentatively scheduled for June 14th to officially discuss the security situation and what the NPF proposes to do to control the violent crime.

19. Ambassador Jeter, RSO Gibson and RSO Bishop also met with the Acting National Security Advisor who is also the Director General of the Nigerian State Security Service (SSS) at the SSS headquarters in Abuja regarding the same issue. Both the Ambassador and RSO Gibson briefed the Acting NSA regarding the increase in crime in Ikoyi and Victoria Island, Lagos, and expressed their concerns that local criminals were becoming more organized, violent and brazen in the commission of their offenses. The Acting NSA was attentive and clearly impressed with the Mission extensive information on the criminal threat that in Lagos. The Acting NSA admitted that there was a well-organized gang working in the area of Ikoyi that apparently had received some military and/or police training. He revealed that the SSS and its counterpart in the Republic of Benin were working closely to eradicate the criminal presence along the porous Nigerian/Benin border and would use all available means to counteract this new carjacking threat. As the meeting drew to a close, the Acting NSA queried the Ambassador on what can be done to restore the confidence of the people in the police ability to control crime. The Ambassador responded that a central authority in control of Nigeria security agencies and assets in Lagos would be a positive step to restoring the people confidence; moreover, the GON needed to

send a senior security official to brief the diplomatic community in Lagos to convince them that the security situation would be brought under control. The Acting NSA promised to take these items under advisement for the next security meeting scheduled this week and also offered to send a representative to the next scheduled Diplomatic Corps meeting on security.

10. The Consul General and RSO will schedule a meeting with the Lagos-based Diplomatic Corps for June 14th, to brief them on the results of these meetings. It is hoped that promised representatives from the NPF and the SSS do indeed attend to foster a frank exchange of views on the current crime situation. Results of this meeting will be reported as appropriate.

JETER